

House Republican Press Release

June 20, 2005
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Another Disappointing Session Conclusion



By State Representative John J. Ryan

As a regular column reader, you are well aware that the State Legislature usually concludes its regular session with a non-stop flurry of activity, and once again that is the case, and once again there are far more topics than we can cover in one column, so we will dive right in:

- The budget: was adopted with a few days to go in the session; I (and numerous other Republican legislators) voted against it, because of its many bad components, some of which were that it exceeds the spending cap, has an increase of 8.9% in the first year of the biennium, spends nearly \$650 million of this year's projected \$700 million surplus (and accordingly, leaves us with a tiny "Rainy Day Fund" account), makes few real spending cuts, and gives one-third of both the total education funding and municipal aid of the State to just Bridgeport, Hartford and New Haven (about 11% of the State's population). The only good news is that, given the large Democrat majorities in both the Senate and House, it could have been worse!
- Tax increases aplenty: the crunch on lower Fairfield County continues to tighten, with an outrageous new Estate Tax, starting on estates at only \$2 million, and effective retroactively to January 1, and topping off at 16%! And then there is the 20% surcharge on corporate profits, and of course, the increased conveyance tax was kept in place and did not 'sunset', and then there is a brand-new 'recording fee' of an additional \$30 per document on items recorded in the Land Records, a very convenient way of getting around the budget mechanism/spending cap. Again, the good news is that at least there is not a progressively increased income tax on top of all this!
- Transportation improvements: everyone had agreed, after much discussion, on Governor Rell's initiative for badly needed new rail cars, I-95 improvements and the like, but incredibly, the bill never got out of the State Senate! (You might want to look into how Fairfield County Senators voted on this one!) There are promises from the Democrat Senators to get this done in our upcoming Special Session (I will bet that you are astounded to learn that there is yet another summer Special Session on the way....), but this is totally inexcusable politicking at its worst, in my humble opinion.

- Governor Rell vetoes: the Governor has already vetoed several items, including the 'crack cocaine bill' and the equally inappropriate 'school nutrition bill' (Cablevision gave an interesting, and terse editorial summary and support of the veto that you might want to note), but with the large Democrat majorities, clearly the Governor has to 'pick her battles' and can't risk having a veto overturned.

Finally, we dodged a bullet at the very end of the Session, when the House and Senate each passed a different version of a 'clean elections bill', which meant that nothing happened. But were you aware that 'clean elections' means that your tax dollars go into a fund for politicians to spend on their campaigns, and that your ability to financially support Connecticut candidates of your choice would be seriously reduced? This radical proposal is very close to becoming reality, and if you would rather see your state government spend your money on schools rather than political campaigns, you would be well advised to do homework on these proposals and make your feelings known NOW!

There is much more to tell you, but stay tuned!

Please feel free to contact me with your concerns and issues. As your state representative, it is my job, and my priority to represent you and to make sure that your needs and concerns are addressed at the capitol. You can write to me at Room 4200, Legislative Office Building, Hartford, CT 06106-1591, send me e-mail at John.Ryan@housegop.state.ct.us or call my office toll-free at 1-800-842-1423.